



A JOINT MESSAGE FROM

DAV and the DAV Auxiliary

Congressman Mike Coffman (CO) introduced legislation, HR 4635, to increase the number of women hired as peer counselors for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) suicide prevention program to specifically address the special needs of women veterans.

Women veterans face unique challenges reintegrating in their homes and communities after deployment. They are more likely to be divorced, single parents, and lack a social network. They are also more likely to be unemployed and struggle financially, despite higher educational attainment than male peers. Exposure to military sexual trauma and substance abuse disorders make women veterans more prone to homelessness and at a higher risk for suicide.

Because women comprise a small, but growing portion of the veterans population using VA services, VA providers are not always knowledgeable or understanding of women veterans' needs. Peer specialists have been shown to be especially successful in engaging veterans who need VA mental health services. Ensuring that culturally competent women peer specialists are available will ensure increased understanding of the barriers to care women veterans face, such as lack of child care, legal assistance and assistance with job placement or training.

DAV Resolution Nos. 225 and 245 support the enhancement of services for women veterans, including mental health services, and increased use of peer specialists, which allows DAV's strong support for this bill.

Please use the prepared letter to urge your representative to cosponsor H.R. 4635 and move it forward for final passage.

Thank you for your support of the Commander's Action Network.

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